

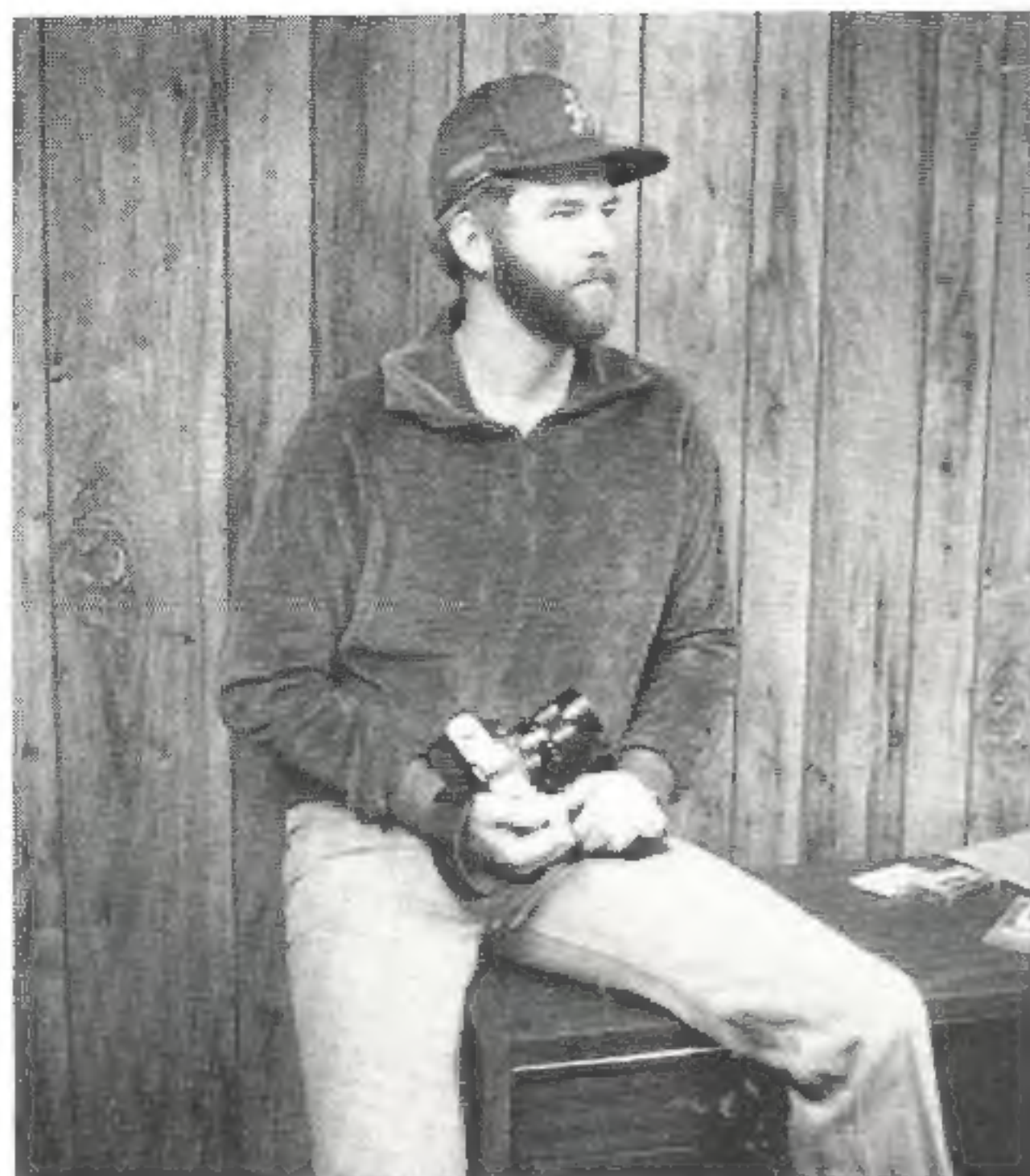
# PLAIN TALKS

MARCH  
1980





## THE COVER



Joe Russian is pictured in his own winning entry in the company's employee photography contest. He's the bearded man wearing a cap, shown fording a stream in the cover photograph.

A photography buff for about 15 years, Russian reports that he had set the camera for the shot, then had a co-worker snap the shutter during a 1976 outing with a survey crew at Lakeview near Vidor, Texas.

At the time, Russian was a GSU draftsman who was permitted to go out with a survey crew for about a week. He is now an estimator in engineering services in the Beaumont Main Office, where he reports to Jerry Tullier.

Russian says his interest in photography began while he was in the Air Force, stationed at a Strategic Air Command base in North Dakota. He shoots about 500 pictures a year. The winning shot was made on slide film, using his 35 mm Minolta 100 camera.

Russian, his wife Jolene and their two sons, Joseph and Chris, make their home in Beaumont.

Gulf States Utilities Company  
Lafayette, Louisiana

Attention Personnel Manager:

I would like to take this opportunity to tell you about one of your employees. His name is Mr. Joe Grisko who works on one of your line trucks.

Joe is one of the most enthusiastic, courteous and energetic public servants I have met in a long time. Gulf States is very fortunate to have a man of this caliber on their payroll. I feel quite sure that this man is a factor of many satisfied customers, I being one of them.

Again, I would like to express what a fine young man he is and wish you would convey this to him.

William Zea  
Director of Overhaul  
and Repair  
Petroleum Helicopters Inc.

Sammie Bono  
Gulf States Utilities  
Lake Charles, La.

Dear council member:

Allow me to extend my sincerest appreciation and gratitude for the recent firm stand you took against the illegal sale of alcoholic beverages to minors. Thank you for following through with your determined convictions to express what I am persuaded are the genuine sentiments of our true Christian citizens.

Anytime a minister, an elected official, an educator or any citizen takes such a deliberate moral stand, there is always a price which must be paid. Thank you for counting the cost and paying the price. Great moral leadership never brings praise from all of the people, nor makes one popular with the masses, but the greatest

sense of fulfillment and reward comes when we do what we know is right and for the highest good for our world in which we live.

Respectfully yours,  
Clarence E. Young, D.D.  
Maplewood First Baptist  
Church

(Editor's note: Bono is supervisor of the service department for Lake Charles Division T&D. He is a councilman for the Lake Charles City Council.)

## PLAIN TALKS

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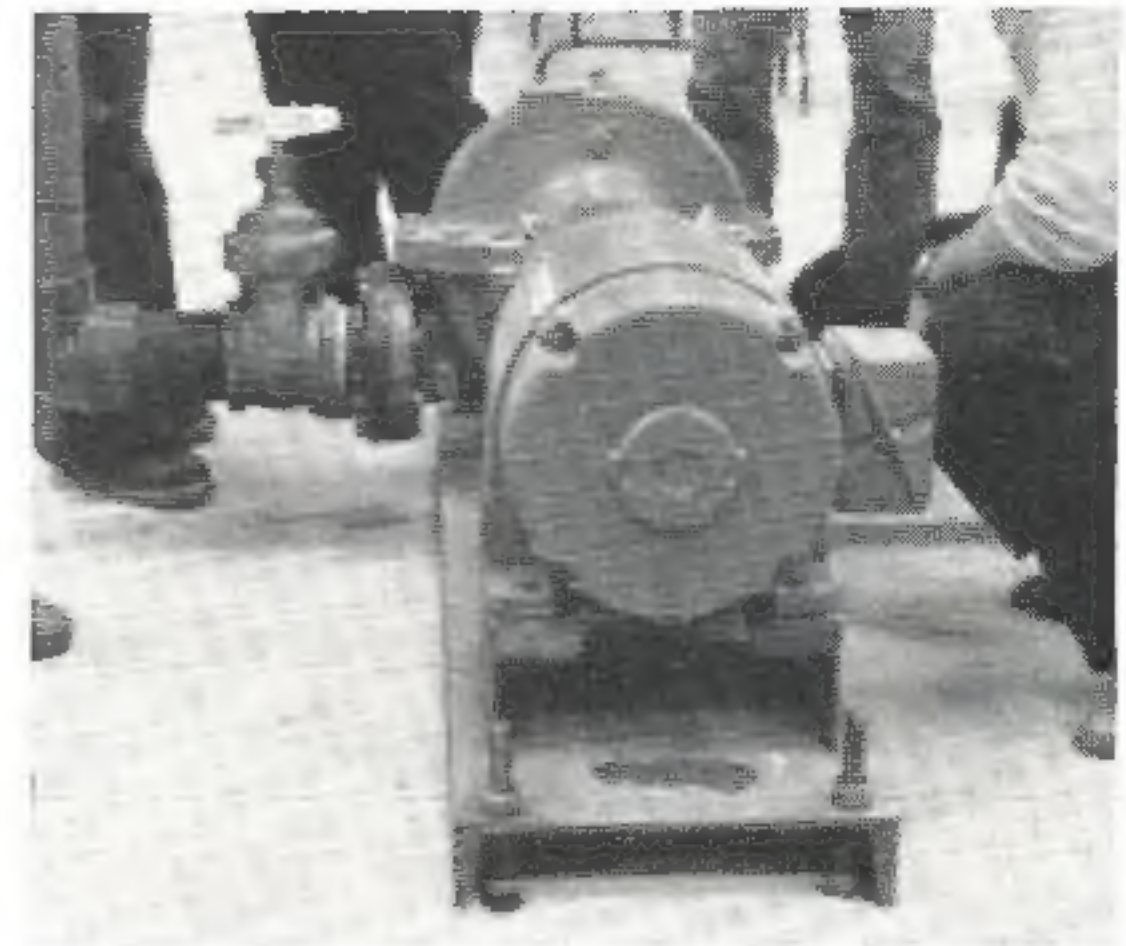
## PLAIN TALKS

### Features

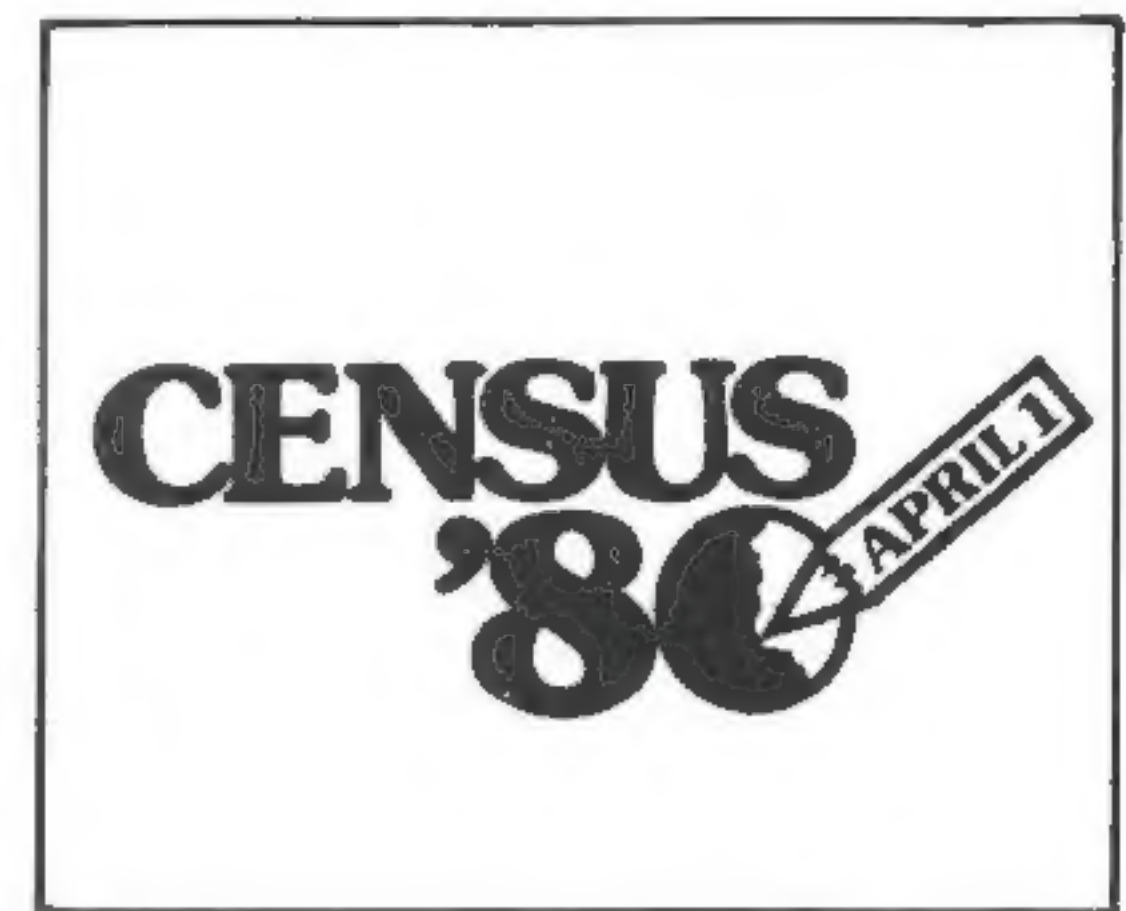
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## LPSC grants interim increase

Gulf States was granted a \$27.1 million interim increase in electric service rates by the Louisiana Public Service Commission (LPSC) on March 11.

The commission authorized the new rates to go into effect immediately, subject to refund if the LPSC does not approve them after full hearings which will be held later this year.

By direction of the commission, the increase will be distributed on a kilowatthour basis.

The interim rate increase request was part of a \$98.9 million request filed by Gulf States December 10, 1979. The company asked for the interim increase to bring GSU's earnings up to the level authorized by the Louisiana commission in its December, 1978, GSU rate order.

An average Louisiana customer uses 1,048 kwhs per month. Prior to the interim increase, an average customer would pay \$39.92 for that amount. He will now pay \$2.04 more, or about five percent more. The increase is .00194 cents per kilowatthour.

## Crawford chairs national committee

Board Chairman Don Crawford has been elected chairman of the U.S. National Committee of the World Energy Conference.

The international conference, composed of national committees from 77 countries, was organized 55 years ago to provide a forum for the exchange of views on all aspects of the world energy situation.

Crawford's election came during the U.S. National Committee's annual conference in Washington, D. C. The National Committee consists of 170 member companies, universities and trade associations.

Crawford also is serving as chairman of the U.S. National Committee of CIGRE, a Paris-based international organization dealing with the technology of large high-voltage electric systems. This is believed to be the first time anyone has simultaneously headed the national committees of both prestigious groups.

As chairman of the U.S. National Committee, Crawford will play a key role in next September's World Energy Conference meeting in Munich, West Germany, which will draw an estimated 5,000 delegates from industrialized and developing nations throughout the world.



## Employees take training course

Six Neches Station employees were recent participants in a power principles, Phase II course, taught by Beaumont Human Resources employee Dan Ross (kneeling).

The course deals with power plant electrical systems, basic electricity and mathematical calculations associated with a power plant.

Participants were (from left), John Winger, Jessie Sartin, Sonja Bonin, Lonnie Kettl, Harold Dubisson (partly obscured) and Reginald Galmore.

## New photo contest to be held

Employees will have another chance to win \$50 and get recognition for outstanding photography this spring.

The Public Affairs Department is conducting a second employee photography contest—and the winning entries in this event will be featured on a PLAIN TALKS cover.

Employees who submit entries—preferably shot on Ektachrome, Kodachrome or black and white film—will receive replacement rolls of the same type of film. Processing will be handled by the department.

PLAIN TALKS Editor Susan Huff urges entrants to submit shots showing GSU employees in a work or recreational setting. "We want people-in-action shots—the sort that will catch the eye of your co-workers. Entries do not necessarily have to be in color—some of the most striking shots can be in black and white," she explained.

Entries should be sent to Susan Huff in the Goodhue Building, Beaumont, no later than Friday, May 2. None will be accepted in the company mail after Monday, May 5.

Selection of winners will be made by members of the Public Affairs staff.

## Company earnings increase one cent

GSU officials have announced that unaudited earnings for the 12 months ended January 31, 1980, were \$1.74 per share of common stock, compared to \$1.73 for the 12 months ended January 31, 1979.

Revenues for the 12 months ended January 31, 1980, were \$875 million, compared to \$731 million for the corresponding period ending January 31, 1979.



# NEW COMMITTEE TO MONITOR RIVER BEND WORK

Three outside nuclear experts, including one who served on the Presidential commission which investigated the Three Mile Island accident, have been named to a new independent advisory committee that will help Gulf States monitor work at River Bend.

Formation of the River Bend Technical Review Committee was announced March 14 at news conferences in Baton Rouge and Beaumont. Two of the three committee members toured the River Bend No. 1 construction site near St. Francisville, La., prior to the news conferences.

Serving on the independent panel are Dr. Herbert H. Woodson, chairman of the Electrical Engineering Department at the University of Texas at Austin; Dr. Edward Lambremont, director of the Nuclear Science Center at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge; and Dr. Thomas H. Pigford, chairman of the Nuclear Engineering Department at the University of California at Berkeley.



Dr. Pigford was a member of the President's Commission on the Accident at Three Mile Island, which spent six months investigating the March, 1979, mishap. The 12-member panel, sometimes called the Kemeny Commission, presented its recommendations to President Carter last October.



Dr. Lambremont, 51, has been associated with LSU since 1973.



Dr. Woodson, a native Texan, is a member of the Austin Electric Utility Commission. His professional activities are primarily in electric power systems engineering and electromechanics.

Board Chairman Don Crawford said appointment of the outside review committee is another step toward ensuring that the River Bend nuclear unit is built and operated with safety as the paramount concern.

"This action, like the company's November decision to separate the River Bend Nuclear Group from other corporate activities, is one more indication of our commitments to make River Bend as safe as possible," Crawford said.

"We are delighted that three such knowledgeable and respected experts in the nuclear field have agreed to serve on the committee," the executive continued. "We particularly look forward to benefiting from the insights gained by Dr. Pigford during his tenure on the Kemeny Commission."

Noting that GSU is setting up the outside committee voluntarily, Crawford said, "This is only one of many initiatives undertaken by the nuclear power industry since Three Mile Island. The Nuclear Safety Analysis Center (NSAC) and the Institute for Nuclear Power Operations (INPO) are already at work trying to improve on nuclear energy's enviable safety record."

Dr. Linn Draper, vice president and technical assistant to the chairman of the board, will keep the committee members fully informed of developments and activities involving River Bend. The panel will meet several times a year for briefings from representatives of the River Bend Nuclear Group.

The committee's findings will be presented periodically to a River Bend Policy Committee, which will consist of three members of GSU's board of directors.

by Kim McMurray



# CONSUMER AFFAIRS PANEL GIVES CUSTOMER'S SIDE

by Susan Huff

**I**t started like thousands of other social gatherings.

Men and women representing a wide cross-section of occupations joined each other for dinner in a Lake Charles motel restaurant, with a few latecomers hurrying to finish their meal as the guest speaker began his presentation.

The similarity continued, as GSU's Joe DeJean, director-customer relations, discussed his work within the utility industry.

But there were differences.

Those seated in the dining room were members of the company's Calcasieu Consumer Affairs Panel (CCAP)—a group of electric-bill-paying customers and ordinary citizens who represent the interests of all Lake Charles Division customers.

As DeJean pointed out, the electric utility industry is essentially a service industry. In recent years, some customers have found it difficult—for a variety of reasons—to adjust to today's rising energy costs.

According to DeJean, GSU is attempting to deal with the dilemma. "There's an obligation we feel very intensely as a utility company—enabling our customers to afford to live in a comfortable lifestyle in the future."

DeJean continued, "We think we're pretty dedicated, but that matters only up to a point. It's what the customers think that counts."

CCAP members had plenty of questions for DeJean and other GSUers attending the dinner, but their friendly queries reflected a genuine interest in hearing the company's side of each issue.

Several members of the 15-person panel have been with the group since its first meeting last May 21.

Even so, the inevitable question was asked.

"Sometimes the fuel adjustment part is larger than the electric bill—You say you need it to make money as a company. What did you do before you had fuel adjustment?"

Dennis Singletary of Lake Charles Division customer accounting explained that fuel costs were always included in the electric bill, but were separated from the base rate in 1973.

Another panel member, George Morse, warned the GSU representatives that fuel adjustment is "the most misunderstood portion of the whole thing."

Morse, who is president of the six-parish Southwest Louisiana Better Business Bureau, and other panel members urged GSU to launch a campaign to better explain the fuel adjustment charge.

After hearing DeJean predict that electricity costs could double in a five-year period, Laura Thibodeaux noted one of the best things the company could do to inspire customer conservation efforts would be to devise a chart showing about how much it costs to operate a certain appliance for a specific period of time.

The company already has some charts which base costs on kilowatthours of usage, but Mrs. Thibodeaux said that measurement is not familiar to most customers.

According to Mrs. Thibodeaux, who owns a Lake Charles bridal shop, "The greatest motivation (for a customer to conserve) is to know what amount of money this costs."

Mike Wittler placed some of the blame for the energy predicament on customers.

The Calcasieu Parish soybean and rice farmer declared, "We are energy hogs. The general consumer of energy does not care, so long as he can get a cost

of living increase in his hourly wages to pay the extra amount."

Panel members admitted that they themselves were sometimes willing to pay more for the convenience of electricity.

Members also expressed concern about senior citizen customers who must pay rising utility bills on fixed incomes.

DeJean said the company is attempting to deal with that continuing problem, mentioning budget billing as one possible solution. GSU was a staunch supporter of legislation, passed last year by Louisiana lawmakers, that is designed to help the elderly poor with their utility bills.

Before adjourning, panel members agreed to invite GSU officials to explain what services are offered by the company at their March meeting.

Another consumer affairs panel has been seated in the Beaumont Division since 1979. Similar panels will probably eventually operate in the remaining three divisions of the company.



# IN-HOUSE SURVEY STUDIES CUSTOMER'S VIEW OF GSU

Gulf States' employees handle an average of 6,000 incoming telephone calls per day from customers—an awesome number of contacts that could have a significant public relations impact.

That was the conclusion of Executive Vice President Joe Bondurant, who wondered how customers perceive GSU as a result of a telephone experience.

Bondurant discussed his thoughts with other company officers in 1979. As a result, Richard Peterman, manager-customer services, Joe DeJean, director-customer relations, and two of his co-workers devised a survey for measuring those perceptions.

After Port Arthur Division Vice President Ted Meinscher volunteered to let his division try the experimental survey, it was carried out last October and November. Since then, the results have been tabulated and the survey has been expanded to include all other divisions of the company. Each division will again be surveyed during the summer, since the first survey took place during an off-peak period.

Results are not yet available for the other divisions, some of which have not completed the two-month survey period.

But the story told by those figures has been an optimistic one for the Port Arthur Division.

According to data compiled in the survey, between 90 and 100 percent of the persons called back each week and interviewed by Gulf States' surveyors expressed either extreme or normal satisfaction with the way another GSU employee had treated them during a recent telephone conversation.

Peterman described Port Arthur as an ideal location for launching the survey since it was close enough to Beaumont to enable DeJean and his two coor-

dinators, Brent Dorsey and Doug McCormick, to stay in touch with employees involved in the survey.

He emphasized that the survey was not designed to measure job performance or to compare performance among districts, divisions or departments, but simply "to determine how a customer perceives GSU."

Results may be used to improve company service to customers by justifying additional resources and training for employees who deal with customers daily.

DeJean said the mechanics of the survey were simple. Every employee who talks to customers by telephone was provided with a pad of survey forms and asked to record such data as the caller's name and telephone number, the date of the call and the nature of the call.

"In most cases," explained McCormick, "all an employee had to do was to make a check mark." The listings for the purpose of the call included turn on, turn off, transfer, bill inquiry, collections, fuel adjustment clause, new service, request for an energy audit, request for conservation information, inquiry on job status, lights off, voltage and load checks, security lights, tree trimming, street lights and line work clean-up. Other purposes could be written out.

DeJean, McCormick and Dorsey followed up each week by calling a random sample of those earlier callers and asking questions that would give them an idea of how the customer believed he had been treated. They let enough time elapse to permit employees to take any action that might be needed in response to a customer's call. One question—Did you have to dial our number a) one time? b) two times? c) more than two times to get through?—helped determine

whether the current telephone system was adequate. Other questions dealt with whether a customer was placed on hold and for how long, if a GSU representative was courteous, whether the GSUer knew much about the subject of the call and whether the purpose of the call was resolved satisfactorily. Employees did not identify themselves on the survey sheets.

DeJean said he and the other two men made the call-backs because they felt it would "lend credibility to our findings if it were obvious that Gulf Staters were asking the questions."

In every other division, except the Western Division, former employees who left the company with good records are making the call-backs. In the Western Division, an extensively trained parttime employee is making the calls.

Following the Port Arthur Division survey, department heads were given the results and encouraged to use them to determine where customer service might be improved and to identify those areas where employees are doing a good job handling customers.

Summing up the survey, DeJean noted, "Historically, everybody remembers the bad, but fails to remember the good. A survey like this can provide realistic, rational data that shows where we need reinforcement."

"But," he continued, "it can also serve as a boon for employees when they see what a high percentage of customers feel that they were treated courteously—that they *really* are doing a good job."



# Census to Sketch New Portrait of Nation

**F**or most Americans, the 1980 census will be simple enough.

A questionnaire will arrive in the mail on March 28. The recipient will simply answer the questions, which will not take long, and then either mail back the form on April 1 or hold it for a census taker to pick up, depending on the instructions.

What may not be apparent to Gulf Staters and millions of other Americans, as they answer the census in the privacy and convenience of their homes, is the fact that they are making personal contributions to an undertaking so vast, so complex, that the 1980 census qualifies as one of the largest peacetime efforts ever mounted in this country.

By the time the last American is counted sometime during the summer, the Bureau of the Census will have reached an estimated 222 million U.S. residents and 86 million housing units and gathered more than 3 billion answers.

It is expected that dramatic changes in American family life, income, housing costs, population distribution and Congressional representation will be revealed by the 1980 census, along with one of the lowest population growth rates in our history.

The census will sketch a new and unique portrait of the nation, revealing not only the number of Americans, but their location, condition, activities and how they are housed.

It will document the changes indicated in recent years by ongoing Census Bureau surveys, and will spell out in great detail the changes in U.S. society of the past decade.

The American family is one example. The 1980 census is expected to show that:

- The number of husbandless women who are heading families has soared nearly 50 percent since

1970 to more than 8 million.

- The traditional family household of mother, father and one or more children now accounts for less than a third of the nation's households, the lowest percentage ever.

- Both husband and wife have earned income in about one-half of the 48 million husband-wife families in the U.S., a new high.

- The number of unmarried couples sharing a household has more than doubled in 10 years.

As for population distribution, the 1980 census is expected to define sizable population shifts from northern and eastern states to the southern and western areas. Census data will measure population shifts by age, race, ethnic origin and in other ways. For example, annual surveys by the Census Bureau since 1973 have found that blacks moving to the South outnumber those leaving, reversing a trend of more than a century. The census will determine whether the blacks moving into the South are newcomers or returning to the South, where they are settling and what job skills they bring—detailed information that surveys, by their nature, do not provide.

Income data will be of interest to economists and others. Discounting inflation, there was a 34 percent increase in median family income between 1960 and 1970, but the increase from 1970 to 1978 was only four percent. The big drop can be attributed to economic sluggishness, to the increase in the number of families maintained by single parents, who tend to have a lower average income, and to changing age structure and family composition. Compared to the 1960s, a higher percentage of people are now in their early, rather than mature, earning years.

The economic impact of the "baby boom" after World War II

will continue to be tracked by the census. They have grown to be young adults, ages 18 to 34, and are now in the job market, establishing families, buying homes and exerting new pressures on the economy because of their number.

Housing is a major aspect of the 1980 census, with more than half the questions expected to focus on that topic. Government and private industry have a wide demand for the information that will be collected about housing in use, vacant dwellings and units such as mobile homes. It is believed that the total number of housing units will have increased more than 20 percent since 1970, twice the rate of population growth.

The census will also provide data on poverty, useful for allocating federal funds.

It is the Constitutional basis for reapportioning seats in the House of Representatives, and recent population estimates by the Census Bureau suggest that extensive redrawing of district boundaries will be necessary in Texas and a number of other states that may gain one or more seats. About six states could lose seats.

About eight months after the census begins on April 1, the first of some 300,000 pages of published characteristics will tell the story.





# COMPANY VIEWS COAL TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

As construction continues on Nelson 6, GSU's first coal-fired generating unit, company officials are considering aspects of coal transportation that must be dealt with before the unit goes on line.

On January 23, reports George Ketterer, director-coal transportation, the company signed a letter of intention with Bethlehem Steel Corp. for the purchase of 605 coal porter railroad cars.

According to Ketterer, the first delivery of 121 cars should be made on September 1, 1981.

The railroad cars will be used to transport about 2.5 million tons of low-sulfur coal per year from the Powder River Basin of Wyoming to the Nelson 6 site near Lake Charles. It will take the trains nine and a half days for the round trip from Gillette, Wyoming, to Nelson. Each coal car will carry about 100 tons of the Western sub-bituminous coal.

On February 18, Ketterer testified before the Senate Surface Transportation Subcommittee in Baton Rouge, voicing Gulf States' support of U.S. Sen. Russell Long's proposed amendment to the railroad deregulation bill. The Louisiana Democrat's amendment would have the effect of placing the burden of proof on the railroads to show the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) that their charges are reasonable.

Ketterer expressed a concern of many utilities when he told the subcommittee, "...we are a captive shipper with no transportation alternative but the railroads. A National Coal Association study shows 85 percent of the coal now being shipped by rail could not, as either a practical or economic matter, be transported any other way."

Ketterer went on to say, "Our customers are already angry and



confused about fuel costs, and I cannot help but wonder what might happen when they discover the cost of transporting coal can easily be *twice the cost of the coal itself*."

Ketterer told the subcommittee there had been a 128 percent increase in coal traffic rates, compared with a 113 percent increase for all rail traffic, in the years from 1969 to 1978.

He added, "In the last couple of years, additional substantial increases in coal rail rates have attracted wide publicity. In July of 1974, as GSU prepared for its first coal unit, we obtained a rail rate of \$8.94 per ton for our shipments from Wyoming to Lake Charles. Today's comparable rate would be \$21 per ton—a 235 percent increase."

While GSU supports adequate, equitable rail rates that contribute to the financial well-being of the railroads, the company does not believe captive shippers should be charged unreasonably high rates to offset losses in other areas, Ketterer noted.

"One of the most telling commentaries on the rail cost issue," declared Ketterer, "is the fact

that foreign oil is now economically competitive with domestic coal."

Ketterer pointed out that electric utilities have had to turn to domestic coal as one way to reduce the nation's reliance on foreign oil.

GSU's agreement with the Kerr-McGee Coal Company provides the company with 2.5 million tons of low sulfur Western coal annually for 20 years. According to Ketterer, company officials hope to have 4 million tons a year under contract by 1985.

The fact that the only currently practical way to transport that much coal from Wyoming to Lake Charles is by rail places GSU in a "very vulnerable position," he said.

It is estimated that utilities will use 71 percent of the coal produced in 1980, and by 1983, the figure should be closer to 74 percent.



# Love of Music Draws Neche Employees Together



**W**hile the five men tuned up their instruments and adjusted electric amplifiers, their friends, wives and children visited with each other.

But when the men—including four Neches Station power plant co-workers and the son of a Beaumont service center employee—were finally ready to settle down to serious playing, all the others took notice.

This group of musicians represents only a small number of GSU employees who are also musicians.

The Texas men became friends on the job, then discovered they shared an interest in bluegrass, gospel and country and western music.

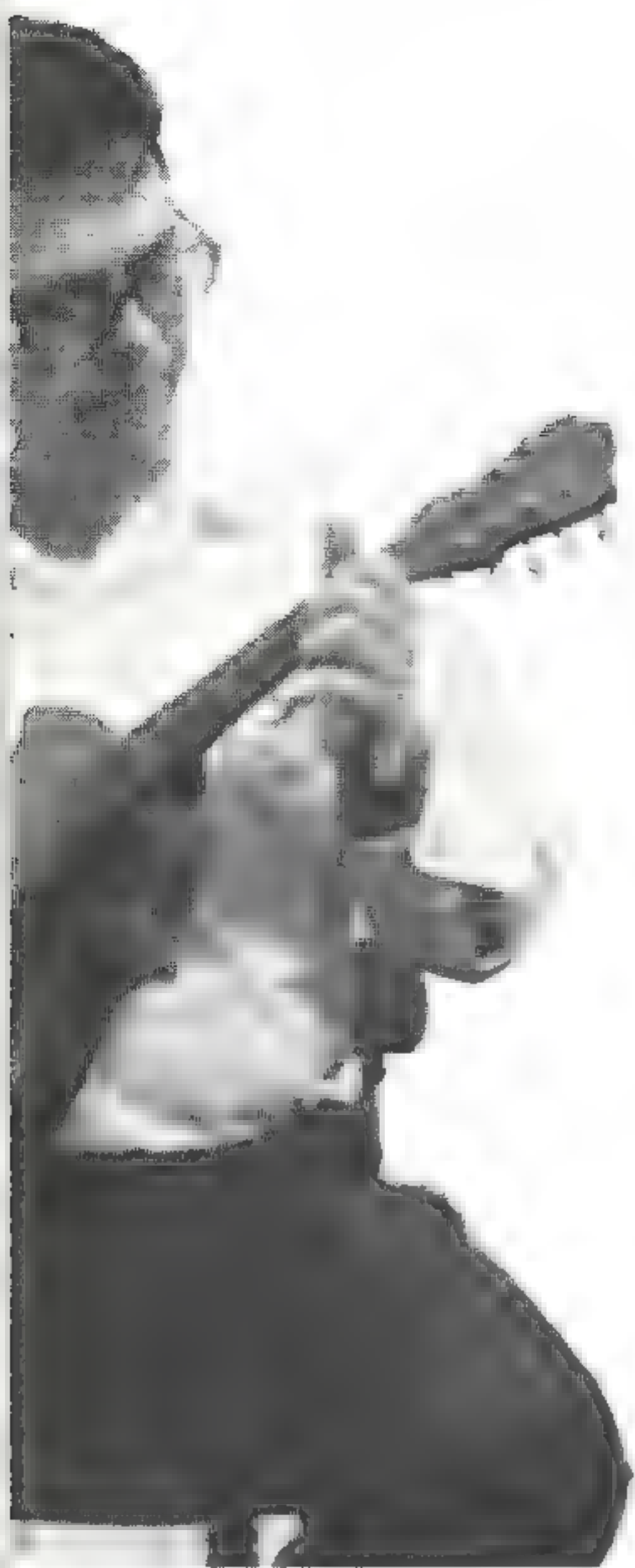
Recently, the men gathered in the home of another co-worker, Dudley Williford, bringing their guitars, fiddles, banjos and mandolins.

Williford revealed that he and his wife, Iona, played host to the





# Neches Station



gathering because "we just love to hear them play and to have them over."

It was the second such gathering to take place in the Willifords' Beaumont home.

That night, the musicians were Fred Jones, an equipment operator from Vidor; Rodney Barnett, second fireman from Beaumont; Delbert Jordan, second fireman from Nederland; Ben Ketcherside, relief equipment operator from Silsbee; and Paul Vick, whose father, Ray, is a Beaumont service center employee.

While all of the men now view music as a pleasant pastime, Barnett once played country music as a profession.

Halfway through the evening, Mrs. Williford served coffee, punch and snacks to her guests. She also had a birthday cake for one guest—Rhonda Jordan, who is married to Delbert.



In the large photo, Rodney Barnett sings and plays (center), accompanied by Delbert Jordan (left) and Ben Ketcherside (right).

In the picture above, Paul Vick (foreground) concentrates on a tune, while Jordan strums his mandolin.

Sixteen-month-old Sarah Barnett is fascinated by her father, Rodney, and his fellow musicians. She is held by C. A. McGee of Neches Station.

In the bottom left photo, Ketcherside and Fred Jones.

Barnett's other two children, Rachel, 5, and Casey, 8, join their dad in a song. Also shown are Jones, Freddy Landis (a friend of the Willifords)





# CONGRESSMAN NAMES GULF STATER'S DAUGHTER TO MARDI GRAS COURT



*Charlie, Pam and Pat Coleman paused for a camera just before attending the 33rd annual Mardi Gras Ball in Washington, D.C. in February.*

Late last summer, a Republican Congressman telephoned Pam Coleman of Jackson, Louisiana, to tell her she would serve as a princess-in-waiting for the 33rd annual Mardi Gras ball in Washington, D.C.

The nineteen-year-old college student is the daughter of Charlie Coleman, service man-first class in Zachary, and his wife, Pat.

Six months later, Pam and her Democrat parents joined other Mardi Gras revelers in the nation's capital.

U.S. Representative W. Henson Moore, whose district includes Jackson, chaired the 1980 event.

Afterwards, Pam said, "From beginning to end, it was a truly exciting and unforgettable experience."

And Pam's mom recalls her participation in the Mardi Gras festivities as having been "thrilling."

Not only was it the family's first time to participate in a Mardi Gras ball, it was also the first time any of them had flown.

Pam and other Louisianians serving on the queen's court were flown on two chartered planes from New Orleans, after having been entertained by former Governor and Mrs. Edwin Edwards on February 5. They were met at the Baltimore-Washington Airport by Congressman and Mrs. Moore. Her parents and her 23-year-old sister, Terry Barrett, flew to the

capital on a commercial flight.

The entire family stayed in the Washington Hilton, along with others participating in the festivities.

According to Mrs. Coleman, the group toured national landmarks in Washington and nearby Arlington, Virginia.

On Friday, February 8, women in the court were formally presented at the Mardi Gras dinner dance hosted by the Krewe of Louisianians. The Mardi Gras Ball was held the following evening, with participants including the Marine Corps Band, Naval Academy Midshipmen, costumed guests and the Krewe of Louisianians.

Mrs. Coleman said she was probably most pleased with the ball, when the Hilton ballroom was filled with floats that actually paraded around the room.

Among Pam's most memorable experiences, she said, was "meeting so many top-level officials from Louisiana"—encounters that helped to make the trip both educational and fun.

Pam attends Southwest Mississippi Junior College in Summit, where she is majoring in distribution and marketing technology. She has a brother, 21-year-old Chuck, who attends Southeastern State University in Hammond, Louisiana.



# Info-Line Serves as Valuable Supplement to Grapevine

The employee "grapevine" finally has some competition.

In the past, employees often had to rely on word-of-mouth to obtain fast-breaking company news such as rate increases, executive promotions or major actions by the board of directors.

System Billing's telex system has been utilized as a means of quickly spreading important news throughout the company, but the number of employees reached that way is limited.

Details of significant happenings eventually appear in Plain Talks or Newsbreaker, but the fact remained that the quickest, though not necessarily most accurate, way to communicate important news has been the "grapevine."

Now there is an alternative. Info-Line is in operation.

Info-Line is the company's newest vehicle for communicating with employees. In the time it takes to dial into the company's telephone network and punch 155, you can get the latest news from the company or the utility industry.

There won't be a "hot" story every day, of course. But Henry Joyner, manager of communications in the Public Affairs Department, says the goal is to provide information that is useful, educational or even entertaining.

When the Louisiana Public Service Commission granted the company a \$27.1 million interim rate increase on March 11, the news was on Info-Line within minutes after the announcement. Similarly, Info-Line callers learned on March 14 that news conferences were being held that day in Beaumont and Baton Rouge to announce creation of a committee of outside nuclear experts who will help monitor safety-related activities at the River Bend nuclear power plant near St. Francisville.

On other days, Info-Line has informed employees that Blue Cross representatives were available to help resolve health insurance claim problems, that the company has been featured in Business Week magazine and the Wall Street Journal, and that a stock-

holder survey had produced some interesting results.

Normally, the messages are changed daily. In the event of a fast-breaking news development, however, a new recording can be produced within a matter of seconds.

The current voice of Info-Line is Don Pumphrey, a community affairs representative who has several years of experience in broadcast journalism. Various members of the Public Affairs Department supply Pumphrey with information he uses to record the daily messages.

Kim McMurray, director of employee information and media services, encourages departments that have items suitable for Info-Line to contact him.

"We think Info-Line is a valuable employee communications tool, but it's going to take time, and a steady diet of interesting information, to get people into the habit of daily calling," McMurray said.

## Kite-Flying: The Unsinkable American Pastime

As a nation, we have been duped for years by a multi-million-dollar industry, and until now nobody has had the courage to step forward and tell the truth.

The Big Lie being perpetrated by the American kite industry is that kite-flying is fun. That clanish group of industrialists has lulled the American people with thoughts of idyllic spring afternoons and a brightly colored kite set against a cobalt sky. Children with straight white teeth that will never need braces smile as the kites weave above them.

For some reason, the kite industry has gotten away with the fairy tale—which is most unusual since we all know the truth.

We all know that kite flying ends up with fathers screaming

and tears splashing down kids' faces. The flower beds are trampled; the kite is in the neighbor's tree; the kite tail was not a rag like you thought, but a new \$30 sheet. The dog is howling and trying to unwrap itself from the kite string. You have painful little burns on your fingers where the string ran through too fast. The kids are whining because they never got a chance to fly the kite. And thunderheads are boiling on the horizon.

The tragedy in all this is that you are probably going right out there and doing it all again this year. And the kids have their usual bright smiles as they begin by snapping that flimsy stick that goes across the back of the kite.

So, if you are going to do it, you

should at least minimize the number of disasters.

Never use anything except plain old string for the kite. If you use something with wire in it, you have just dramatically increased the chances of someone getting shocked if the kite string crosses a power line.

And, in the first place, don't fly kites near power lines.

Don't fly kites in bad weather or you might be subjected to the Ben Franklin effect, which for some reason had no serious impact on him.

And what if you do get a kite hung up in a power line or a tree that has a power line near it? Spend another \$1.29 on a new kite and forget the one you lost.

by David White





## Moses moves into division position

Judy Moses, newly-named superintendent of the consumer services department-Beaumont Division, was honored with a going-away party by her former co-workers in the system consumer services department.

Kay Fowler is shown presenting a gift to Miss Moses.

Previously, Miss Moses was director-business development. Her new job, which became effective March 1, moved her from the Beaumont main office to the Calder Building.

She replaced Robert Sheffield, who became superintendent of the newly-formed Northern District of the Beaumont Division. The new district was formed by combining the old Silsbee and Woodville districts. Sheffield was once the superintendent of the Silsbee District.

## Beaumonters report wild goose chase

Beaumont Division transmission and distribution employees Ernest Fisher and Les Jones reportedly were involved in a wild goose chase while on the job near Raywood, Texas, recently.

According to Jones, a PLAIN TALKS correspondent who took the picture of Fisher and the bandaged goose, the two caught the injured bird in a rice field, following a brief chase.

Upon discovering it had suffered a broken wing, the two men wrapped the injured wing to its body with flagging. The goose rode with the men in a company truck that day, returning with them to Beaumont that evening.



Two days and several phone calls later, reports Jones, the goose was delivered to Joe Lagow, an Anahuac, Texas, rancher who has a hunting preserve.

Fisher, an avid duck and goose hunter, supposedly told Jones, "I finally got my goose."



## Jim Atkins honored at retirement party

Jim Atkins, manager-employment, retired from GSU February 1, ending a 42½-year career with the company.

Former co-workers honored Atkins with a going-away party at Neches Station that day.

He is pictured visiting with Les Moor, vice president-human resources (center), and other guests at the party.

## Conroe clerk given baby shower

Sharon Bussell, a clerk in customer accounting in Conroe, was honored with a surprise baby shower earlier this year.

Co-workers gave her a wide variety of baby items and served refreshments.



## Conroe meter reader helps elderly man

An elderly couple in the Western Division was probably never so glad to see their meter reader as they were one day early in January, reports Nina Wiley, Plain Talks correspondent from Conroe.

Meter reader Danny Balko told Ms. Wiley, "I was reading meters when I noticed an elderly lady waving her hands at me. I went over to check and saw an elderly man lying on the ground near a car."

According to Ms. Wiley, Balko helped the man into his wheelchair. He reportedly had fallen while trying to get out of the car alone, although he was partially paralyzed. Balko said, "I later found out he had broken his arm in the fall."



## Baton Rouge employee bags big buck

Clyde Wilson, Baton Rouge T&D employee, wasn't disappointed during deer season. Wilson reports having killed a 20-point buck while hunting in southern Mississippi.

According to Wilson, the buck amassed 207.5 points in the Boone and Crockett scoring system, enabling him to win first place in a Baton Rouge sporting goods store's "Big Buck" contest.

As top scorer from among 660 entries, Wilson received a rifle and a free head mount.

## Customer praises Baton Rouge employee

A new GSU customer in Baton Rouge had nothing but praise following her encounter with Baton Rouge employee Jill Street, reports Shivaun Bourgoyne, Baton Rouge correspondent.

According to Ms. Bourgoyne, in a letter addressed to the personnel department, Mrs. John Griffith said that she had met Ms. Street when she paid a deposit on new service. She wrote, "I had the *great* pleasure of meeting Jill Street — a wonderful employee. She was polite, courteous, understanding

and, most of all, *actually interested* in my problem. It really renewed my faith in the human race after losing it through the hassles of moving."

Ms. Street is also a leader in the Employee CONTACT Program.

## Beaumont employee wins snowman contest

Southeast Texas was covered with snow on Groundhog's Day, but Beaumont employee Chuck Lomonte didn't let that keep him inside.



He and his girlfriend, Rhonda Rhodes (shown above), built snowmen that won them second place in KLVI radio's snowman contest.

Lomonte works in the garage at the main office downtown.

## Beaumont employee publishes article

The January, 1980, issue of *Transmission and Distribution* magazine featured an article by Gulf States' employee Ray Coleman.

Coleman, a shop foreman in the Beaumont Division, wrote a two-page article entitled "Recloser maintenance essential."



## Lewis Creek employees go duck hunting

Bobby Dodson and John Dix recently had a successful duck hunt, reports Lewis Creek correspondent D. W. Rutherford.

According to Rutherford, the men bagged canvasback ducks. He adds that Dix, also known as "Deke," has been known to sink a decoy, mistaking it for a real duck.



# Texas Teenagers Conduct Home Energy Audit



About 50 teenagers from Silsbee (Texas) High School participated in an energy audit of their school principal's home in January.

The youths attend a class in home and family living which recently devoted six days of study to energy conservation.

According to Carol Morris, GSU consumer services representative in the National Energy Watch (NEW) program, classroom teacher Lynn Chambers permitted her to visit the classroom one day because she believes "energy conservation is a very timely topic."

Divided into two classes of about 25 each, the 11th and 12th graders first listened to Mrs. Morris' presentation, then traveled to Principal Herbert Muckleroy's home, where they actually helped conduct the energy audit.

Mrs. Morris said the youths checked attic insulation, weatherstripping, caulking, wall insulation and the fireplace. They helped install foam wall gaskets.

Afterwards, on questionnaires, 95 percent of the teens said an energy audit is not difficult to perform.

Charlene Payne, one of the participating students, said she believes such instruction is worthwhile "because it makes you realize where the house and habits of family members could be improved to save energy."

Asked what might be done to improve a home's energy efficiency, student Jana Gore wrote, "Shade windows on the east and west with solar screen; cut down on the use of hot water."

According to Donna Moore, it would help to "Increase attic ventilation by adding more wind turbines on the roof."

Murray Cutbirth advised homeowners to "caulk windows and weatherstrip doors. Try to maintain proper thermostat settings."

And Milton Brown suggested that GSU customers "insulate hot water heaters, use appliances less and turn them off when finished."

Although Mrs. Morris said she would be pleased to conduct similar sessions for other high schools, she noted that Mrs. Chambers' class was the first to request her assistance for just such a program.

Both Mrs. Chambers and the principal apparently are pleased with the results of the program.

The teacher told Mrs. Morris that she considered it "a very good program," while Muckleroy has indicated that he now wants an official NEW energy audit of his home.

Mrs. Morris does not think only teenagers would benefit from such instruction.

A former classroom teacher herself, she suggests, "If we can start children on energy conservation studies at the kindergarten level, then they're going to be oriented toward conservation."



# SERVICE AWARDS

**40**  
years



**C.A. McGee**  
Plant Production  
Beaumont

**30**  
years



**Nadine Hester**  
Office Services  
Beaumont

**20**  
years



**Jerry K. Hutson**  
Plant Production  
Port Arthur

**10**  
years



**Charley L. McGhee**  
Gas Department  
Baton Rouge



**Buren R. Moore**  
Electric T&D  
Baton Rouge



**Gene Fuselier**  
Electric T&D  
Gas Department



**Floyd E. Walters**  
Plant Production  
Port Arthur



**Howard J. Williams**  
Electric T&D  
Beaumont



**Glenda H. Boyd**  
Accounting  
Baton Rouge



**Van A. Bushnell**  
Electric T&D  
Lake Charles



**Marilyn E. Nicholson**  
Plant Production  
Baton Rouge



**William Dee Atwell**  
Production  
Lake Charles



**Phillip Thibodeaux**  
Electric T&D  
Port Allen



## DOE budgets \$50 million on energy conservation

Energy conservation will receive a \$50 million federal publicity boost in an advertising push that the Department of Energy says will place the topic in the forefront of the American consciousness.

The amount is a part of the \$12.65 billion DOE fiscal year 1981 budget sent to Congress early this year.

According to statistics quoted in *The Energy Daily*, the DOE funds, combined with conservation-linked spending by other federal agencies, would bring federal spending for conservation to more than \$3 billion in 1981.

The \$50 million "Energy Information Campaign" is planned as a national one, for which advertising space would be bought on television and radio and in newspapers and magazines. The campaign would be similar to a recent successful one in Canada and DOE has asked for an extra \$7 million in fiscal year 1980 to gather data on which to base its campaign.

In a supporting document on the budget requests, DOE argues that the \$50 million is needed to get effective national exposure. About \$44 million of the total would be spent on buying advertising time and space, and the rest on market research, production of commercials and supporting activities.

Examples of conservation spending proposed by other federal agencies for fiscal year 1981 include improving the energy efficiency of federal buildings (\$308 million) and mass transit (\$1.5 billion). In addition, about \$739 million will be lost to the Treasury as a result of tax credits.

## New device may cut transmission costs

The first commercial test has been made of a new, modified electrical switching device that could cut the cost of transmitting power over long distances, according to an announcement by the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI).

Called a "light-triggered thyristor," the device uses a tiny laser beam and fiber optics to activate the thyristor itself. These thyristors, or solidstate control valves, are essential parts of equipment that fine tune alternating current (AC) transmission systems to allow maximum stable power.

Before, thyristor valves have been triggered electrically. By using a light-trigger instead of an electrically-triggered gate, however, false triggering signals resulting from electromagnetic "noise" created by the high-voltage transmission lines can be eliminated.

In addition, light-triggered thyristors do not require high voltage pulse transformers and auxiliary power supplies operating above ground potential, as do electrically-triggered thyristors. Costs could be cut.

Commercial testing of the light-triggered thyristors, which are being developed by Westinghouse Electric Corp. under a \$1.17 million EPRI contract, is being carried out at Minnesota Power and Light Co.'s Shannon Substation.

## Study investigates coal moving needs

A major study of how U.S. transportation needs will keep pace with growing demands for coal has been announced by the EPRI.

Representing a \$500,000 commitment by EPRI, which is the nonprofit research arm of the U.S. electric utility industry, the project will provide important information as electric utilities make plans to burn more coal, as well as coal-derived synthetic fuels.

According to EPRI estimates, coal movement between U.S. regions will grow from 600 tons in 1978 to between 1.5 billion and 1.8 billion tons in 1985.

Coal will be "increasingly viewed as the energy workhorse of the 1990's," says Dr. Edward G. Altouney, EPRI project manager.

Altouney said the EPRI study, which will continue through 1980, will provide important information to electric utilities by:

- Analyzing existing data on all transportation networks, including railroads, highways, barges and pipelines.

- Using such information to paint a "valuable picture of coal movement throughout the country."

- Projecting where future movements of coal are "likely to increase beyond the current projected transportation capacity."

The study will analyze more than 3,000 transportation links between mines and power plants in the U.S. It will also take into account projected use of slurry pipelines (in which coal is mixed with water and piped across country) and coal used at the mine source.



## EMPLOYEES HELP IMPROVE COMPANY IMAGE IN EYES OF CUSTOMERS

**T**he customer accounting clerk who patiently counsels an elderly customer having difficulty paying rising utility bills and the lineman who works through tropical storm conditions to restore service to hundreds of customers—these are but two examples of GSU employees who seem to be helping to restore the public faith in the utility industry.

When Gulf States was incorporated as a new Texas-headquartered corporation on August 25, 1925, problems were few. For many years afterward, customers were satisfied with their service and the rates they were paying.

But, as every utility employee probably knows, conditions began to change dramatically in the '70s.

A new picture emerged—one that seemed to paint the utility industry in general as an ogre—as spiraling inflation and the fluctuating fuel situation created a need for frequent rate increases, and as GSU and other utilities entered the controversial nuclear power industry.

Recent customer opinion surveys prepared for GSU by Economic and Industrial Research, Inc. (EIRI) of Baton Rouge, reveals "substantial improvements" in the way customers view the company.

A summary of the EIRI findings shows:

—Substantial improvement from 1978 to 1979 is evident among people who rate GSU's service as good or very good. In 1978, some 79.6 percent rated GSU's service very good or good as compared to 90 percent who gave the same ratings in 1979.

—An increased number of

people feel GSU has *not* taken advantage of consumers as a result of the energy shortage.

About a third of the respondents in 1978 said GSU did not take advantage; in 1979, this had increased to over one-half, or 50.8 percent.

—There was a dramatic improvement in public perception of GSU's role in energy conservation, with 63.2 percent saying GSU wants customers to use less electricity. In 1978, only 38.7 percent felt GSU wanted customers to use less.

There probably is no single reason to account for such improvements in customer attitudes toward GSU.

Instead, the upturn is probably a result of many factors—all of which are aimed at improving service to customers. Individual employees appear to have devoted their time and talents to a group effort that has been rewarded, judging by the EIRI results.

The patience of a clerk, the tenacity of a lineman and the friendly advice of a consumer services employee conducting an energy audit have all contributed.

Beyond that, the company has devised a program of improving service that ranges from offering a budget billing plan that helps customers cope with widely fluctuating bills, to enlisting employees like Diane Brandon in Baton Rouge and Sue Kendall in Beaumont who counsel customers on the availability of various public assistance agencies.

The apparent improvement in customer attitude is evident in other parts of our service area.

Members of a Calcasieu Consumer Affairs Panel—whose roles might be viewed as those of adversaries to the company—have expressed their genuine interest in learning more about the problems that face Gulf States in providing enough electricity for customers.

In the Port Arthur Division, customers polled in a recently-completed telephone survey surprised even the employees conducting the survey with their warm responses to questions about the treatment they had received at the hands of GSU—specifically as a result of a telephone conversation with a single GSU employee.

Despite all the good news, GSU is still faced with the prospect of preparing the public for utility bills that could be twice as high by 1985. Future requests for rate increases will almost certainly meet with opposition.

The EIRI study, the Port Arthur Division telephone survey and those now being conducted in other divisions may point to at least one major accomplishment, however.

Perhaps individual employees—people who must pay rising electric bills of their own—have established a rapport with customers that will ease GSU's way through the 1980s.

by Susan Huff



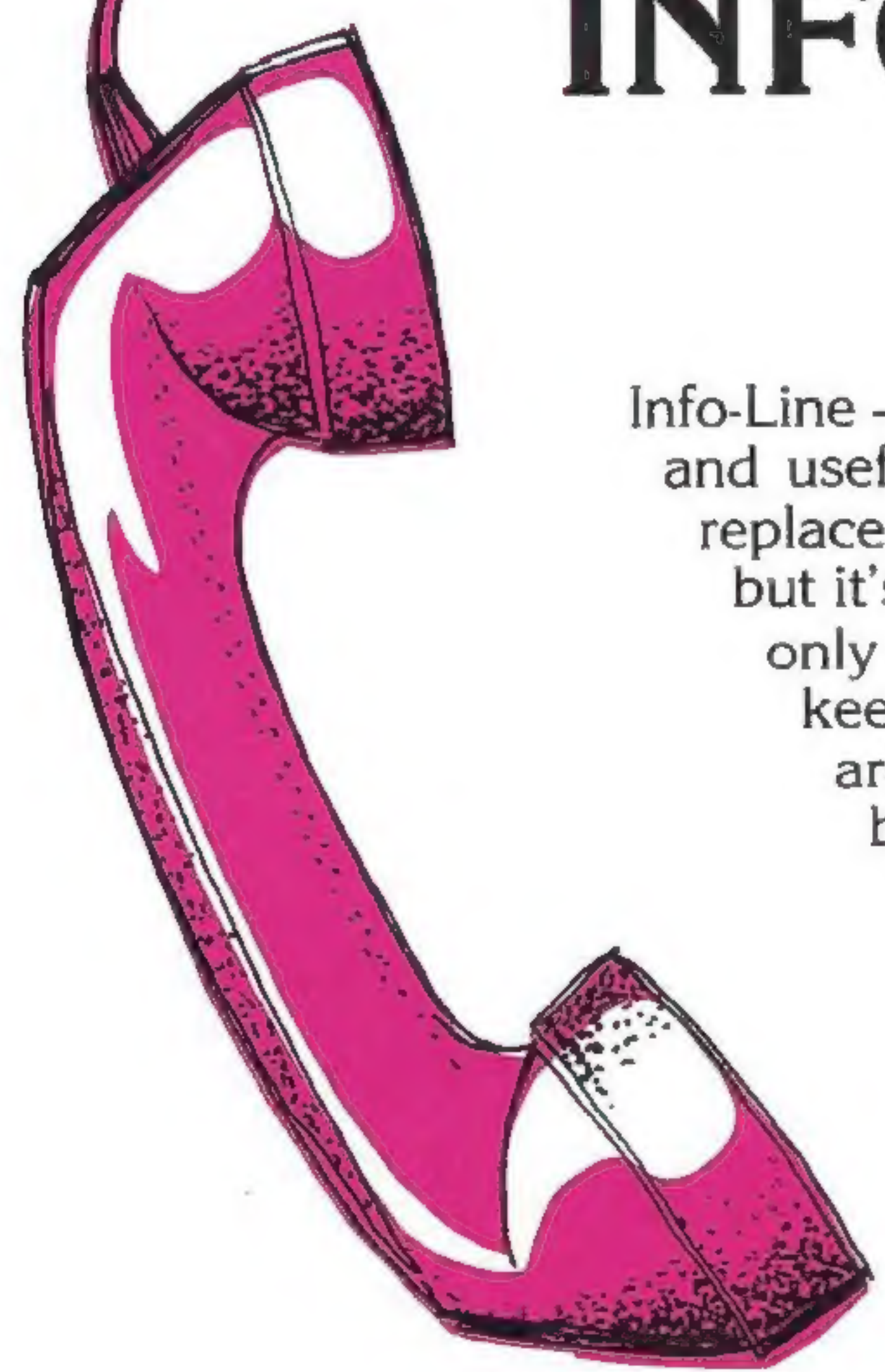
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Info-Line — the daily recorded broadcast of news and useful information — may never actually replace the grapevine as a prime news source, but it's fast, accurate and easy to use. It takes only a phone call and one minute a day to keep up-to-date on the latest happenings around GSU and the utility industry. Late-breaking news is added as it happens. To call Info-Line, simply dial the prefix to get into the system network and then dial:

# 155